TOILET OF ALL NATIONS.

THE GRECIANS.

Although the ancient Grecians never reached the state of luxury and effeminacy of many nations previously noticed of the ancient nations, they were not behind them in attention to hygiene and all the more elegant and useful matters connected with the arts of dress and the toilet. The imaginary food and drink of the gods, which were supposed to contribute to their immortality, and to possess the power of imparting youth, beauty, and vigor to the body, and of keeping the mind in a state of continued health and activity, were figurative allusions to the benign influences which diet and drink may be made to exercise on the human frame. Like many other fables in the beautiful mythology of the Greeks, this conveys a lesson under the fascinating form of allegory, which, in a different garb, would have been less likely to be heeded by the people for whom it was intended. As early as the time of Hippocrate', we find that the "barbers" had acquired a position of considerable importance. Besides plying that portion of their trade which may be strictly called their own, they also performed several of the minor operations of surgery, as was the usage with many succeeding nations until a comparatively recent period.

The Greeks, in the time of Homer, were acquainted with the use of warm baths, for mention is made of them in several passages of his immortal epics; and more particularly in those in which he depicts the delicious life led in the palace of Alcinous, and where he relates the reception given to Ulysses by Circe. The Lacedæmonians or Spartans were the first who adopted the custom, borrowed from the Asiatic nations, of appearing naked at the public games; anointing themselves with oil, and covering themselves with sand, prior to the contest, and then plunging into hot baths. The Lacedæmonians were also the only people among the Greeks whose gymnasia and baths were common to both sexes. With the Greeks, unlike the Romans, the gymnasia occupied almost the entire structure, the portion devoted to the bath being of very limited dimensions. It was not, however, until after the time of Hippocrates, that the employment of baths in private families became general; for we find that the unfrequency of their existence prevented this ancient physician, justly termed "the father of medicine," from recommending their use in many diseases which called for their adoption.

THE ROMANS.

The rude and warlike habits of the Romans during the first two centuries of their existence, engaged as they continually were in scenes of blood and conquest, allowed very little time for the cultivation of the arts of civilization and luxury. After the downfall of the monarchy, and during the purer days of the republic, a nearly similar indifference to dress and personal decoration continued; but as the luxury and wealth of the patricians and citizens increased, they successively adopted the habits and customs of their more refined and voluptuous neighbors. According to Varro, it was not until the fifth century from the foundation of the city that these arts began to be cultivated and practised as a separate calling.

The first "barbers" were brought from Sicily to Rome, by one Ticinius Mena, B. C. 303. In the course of a few years they had so multiplied that the city was full of them. Their shops (*tonstrinæ*), like those of many of the fashionable drapers, jewellers, and tobacconists in London and Paris, and the barbers' shops of our small country towns and villages, soon became the common resort of loungers and idlers of every description, until at length they served to furnish proverbs expressing notoriety. There the gossiping and inquisive portion of the community sought for fashionable news and information respecting affairs of state; there the reports of the night's broil, and the last intrigue, found ready tongues to disseminate them, with all their attendant slanders, to the remotest corners of the city; there the affluent and the indolent consumed their time in courtly chit-chat; and there, too, the less opulent and the industrial classes met for recreation, and discussed current politics, when the hours of toil and business were over. Even the poorer citizens, according to Horace, sought refuge from their *ennui* by making a round of the barbers' shops:—

"Mutat cenacula, lectos,
Balnea, tonsores."

The barber himself furnished an excellent substitute for the modern newspaper. He was, indeed, a walking gazette or periodical, of which the last number was always recent, and ready spread for perusal—an ever busy reporter, who, guiltless of short-hand notes or letter-press, contented himself with those simpler media of receiving and conveying information—the tongue, eyes, and ears. The shop of the higher class of these tradesmen formed a good apology for the modern club-room; that of the humbler professor for the tavern or beer-house. Hence, the "tonstrinæ" constituted an important element in the social condition and progress of the Roman people.

The attention of the Roman barber was first and principally directed to the hair, in which department of the toilet he is said to have excelled, to a degree that might justly excite the envy of the modern "*artiste*" in his line. After the hair, the beard received the immediate exercise of his skill, and here he was equally at home, shaving it or trimming it with great expertness and taste. He next operated on the hands, and trimmed and polished the nails, at the same time removing any callosities that had formed on the palms or joints. Other like trifles, which are now commonly performed by each individual for himself, were also attended to by the Roman barber.

The taste of the Roman people, including even the poorer citizens, appears to have been as great in matters connected with the toilet as it was in sculpture, oratory, and theatricals. As much ridicule was excited by a person who was negligent in this respect, as by one who had committed himself in some more important particular. The man whose hair was dressed or cut untastefully subjected himself to general remark, and his unfortunate *valet* became the object of opprobrium wherever he was alluded to. A "bungling barber" could scarcely ply his trade with profit in the Roman capital, or in any of the larger provincial towns, and would have been continually subjected to personal insult, if not actual chastisement, from his customers.

The fashionable ladies of Rome carried artificial styles of dress and ornaments to an excess which has no parallel in modern times. They spent large sums of money and a considerable portion of their time in the articles and operations of their toilet, and particularly in their baths, as hereafter noticed. Lengthy descriptions of the details connected with them, have been given by several ancient authors, which exhibit a degree of folly, vanity, and voluptuousness scarcely compatible with the commonly received opinion of the Roman character. Among the higher classes, each department of the toilet had its particular operations. Each portion of the body, even each limb, separately commanded attention; and to every one of these duties was assigned a separate servant or slave. The capriciousness of the female taste and temper was, perhaps, never exhibited in a more unfavorable light than in the person of a Roman lady of distinction and fashion at her toilet.

The addiction of the Romans of all classes to the luxury of the bath, commenced in the latter years of the republic. During the monarchy, and the early period of the republic, the Romans were accurtomed, after a day employed in labor in the fields, to wash only the arms and legs; and only on every ninth day, when they came to the city to be present in the assemblies on state business, they bathed the entire body. At that period, the Tiber and its tributary streams formed their only bathing-places. Public and private baths had not yet been established, and vapor and hot baths were only known to them by name.

The situation of the "seven-hilled city" presented great obstacles to the conveyance of water to its interior; and it was not until its wealth and engineering skill had considerably progressed that the citizens, or the authorities, attempted to surmount the difficulty. It was about 441 years after the foundation of Rome that water was first brought into it from Tusculum, by means of an aqueduct constructed by the censor Appius Claudius. After this event, and consequent on it, other aqueducts were formed, and baths or *thermæ*, as yet characterized by the older Roman simplicity, were constructed in various parts of the city. Towards the decline of the republic came the practice of attaching baths to the gymnasia, followed by the fashion among physicians of employing them in the treatment of disease. From this period these structures rapidly increased in number, importance, and embellishment, until, in the reign of Augustus, the Romans began to give to them that completeness, extent, and magnificence which is still observable in their ruins.

It was in the reign of Augustus that Mecenas first instituted a "*calida piscina*," or swimming-bath, supplied with warm water, of a character somewhat similar to the tepid swimming-bath at present existing in London and Paris.

Public baths were now established by the liberality of the State, to promote the health and comfort of the citizens; and of such vastness and grandeur as to render them altogether the most remarkable structures of the Romans. The founders were princes who, in their anxiety to conciliate the goodwill of the people, endeavored to surpass all that had been executed before their time. Different authors reckon nearly eight hundred of these baths or "thermæ" in Rome, many of them of a vastness and magnificance which is utterly astonishing. The most celebrated were those of Agrippa, Antoninus, Caracalla, Diocletian, Domitian, Nero, and Titus. The exterior of these buildings, as well as their internal arrangements and decorations, were of the most costly, elegant, and elaborate description. Their pavements were mosaic; the ceilings vaulted, and richly gilded and painted; and the walls were incrusted with the rarest marbles. Precious vases, bronzes, columns, and statues, from the chisels of the greatest masters, contributed to enhance their beauty and attraction. In beholding the designs of the bas-reliefs and pictures which adorned the walls and ceilings, "we are astonished at the perfection of the objects which they represent, and at the exquisite purity of taste which then prevailed in the arts. Much more than this: we find ourselves forced to acknowledge that all the efforts of modern art, in the decoration of our palaces, museums, and churches, are, in general, but servile imitations of the wonders which the baths of Agrippa, Nero, Titus, etc., offered, near two thousand years ago, to the admiration of the Roman people." The Farnesian bull and the famous Hercules found in one of the halls of the thermæ of Caracalla, and the Laocoon found in the baths of Titus, announce the multiplicity and beauty of the statues which once adorned these colossal structures.

The baths of Diocletian, we are told, were capable of accommodating nearly two thousand bathers. Besides the vast basins, it contained three thousand recesses appropriated to the different baths. But, according to another authority, "supposing each cell (or recess) of Diocletian's baths large enough to contain six people, even at this moderate computation, 18,000 persons might be bathing there at the same time." The same writer further asserts, from his own researches, that the baths of Antoninus Caracalla were capable of supplying 2,286,900 cubic feet of hot water. Allowing, therefore, eight cubic feet of warm water as sufficient for one man to bathe in, and that water preserved at a bathing heat in the labrum for half an hour, there would be a sufficient quantity of water for three hours, or until 5 in the afternoon, for no less than six sets of bathers, each numbering 18,000 persons, or 108,000 persons in all."

It is difficult to enumerate all the various uses to which the Roman baths, or *thermæ*, were devoted. Besides the vast basins, and the thousands of cells or recesses, more particularly appropriated to the purposes of bathing, there were found there theatres, temples, amphitheatres, palaces, festive halls, vast open promenades planted with trees, schools frequented by youth, academies where learned persons assembled for discussion, halls where philosophers taught and lectured, odeums for poetical declamation and music, and libraries to which every one might freely resort. In short, provision was there made for every species of polite and manly exercise and amusement.

THE FIRST TOILET.

The first "toilet" of man we may, with good reason, assume, consisted in mere personal ablution or bathing, followed occasionally by simple adjustment of the hair with the fingers, or with some extemporized implement, to keep it from falling over the face, to prevent it matting together, or to free it when entangled. Soon repetition and convenience would render these operations habitual, and experience and taste improve on them, and suggest others of a more complicated character. Then came the Fall, the use of dress, and the expulsion of our first parents from Eden. After the prostration produced by this calamity had passed away, and "children were born unto Adam," the "toilet" and dress would, undoubtedly, have received more attention; and then it was that fashion had its birth. For some time the toilet and dress continued of the simplest kind, and the fashions that prevailed were equally simple and innocent. The twisted foliage of trees and the skins of beasts were the only garments that then clothed the human race. Wild flowers, plucked from the bush, the sunny bank, or the natural pasture, the richly tinted berries of trees and shrub, and the delicate shells of their lake and river margins, were their only ornaments. The only cosmetic that then tinted the beloved one's cheek and lips was the genial sunshine; and the only jewels that decked her person were the diamonds that sparkled in her health-beaming eyes.

As mankind increased in number and gathered in societies, and the various tastes, affections, desires, and passions of human nature—love, vanity, rivalry, ambition, war, etc.—came into play, the "toilet" and dress would necessarily receive more attention, and the operations of the former would become more numerous and complicated. In many cases, these would have for their object increase of the personal attractions, as well as mere comfort and cleanliness. In this way, in all probability, gradually arose the first "cosmetic processes" properly so called. In some form or other they appear to have been practised among all nations whose minor archæology has descended to modern times.

THE JEWS

appear to have been early characterized by a predilection for showy dress, for cosmetics, jewelry, and perfumes, and for the care which they bestowed on various operations of the toilet, particularly those connected with the hair. According to Moses, the art of working in silver, gold, and precious stones very early reached a state of considerable facility and excellence, as these substances were then commonly manufactured into ornaments to decorate the person. Abraham, we are told, "was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold;" so much so, indeed, that he paid "four hundred shekels of silver, current money," for a "burying-place" for his family. The description given us of his chief man-servant presenting "a golden ear-ring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for the hand, of ten shekels weight of gold," to the beautiful Rebekah, as she tripped with her pitcher from the fountain, may serve to illustrate the usages, tastes, and progress of this period; as may also the text which relates to the same "servant" subsequently "brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah;" and "gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things."

When the Israelites begged Aaron to make them "gods" which should "go before them," he replied:—"Break off the golden ear-rings which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me."

The magnificence and luxury of the reign of Solomon were so remarkable that they have since formed the burden of a proverb. Perfumes and spices, always highly prized and expensive articles among the Jews, came into almost general use during his reign. "Ointment (*pommade*) and perfume rejoice the heart," he sung; while, in another passage, he informs us that "myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon" were used as scents by the courtesans of his day. These substances are also mentioned by the Psalmist—"All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia." The singular fate of Absalom, another son of David, was occasioned, according to popular belief, by the fineness and extreme luxuriance of his hair.

The transit of another century in the history of the Israelites places before us a distinct notice of the use of skin cosmetics. We are told that the "proud Jezebel," when preparing to meet King Jehu, "painted her face" (in the original, "put her eyes in painting") and "tired her head."

Many other notions of an equally singular character are to be found in the books of the Old Testament.

In later periods of the history of the Jews, as may be gleaned from both sacred and profane writers, the predilection for dress and jewelry and the arts of the toilet continued unabated, and, surviving the vicissitudes of time and change, continues still to characterize this strange and scattered race.

THE EGYPTIANS.

The researches of Champollion, Lepsius, Layard, and others, in Egypt and Assyria, and the discovery of the key to the mystical inscriptions found on the wonderful remains of these mighty empires, have added a new era to the page of history.

On examining the vast mausoleums and the other remains of ancient Egypt, the mind is almost paralyzed with wonder at the immense progress which all the arts of life and civilization had made in the ante-Abrahamic ages of the world. These tombs are real museums of antiquity—utensils, toilet-tables, inkstands, pens, books, the incense-bearer, and smelling-bottle are found among them. The scenes sculptured and painted on the temples or in the sepulchres furnish every detail connected with the social life of this ancient people.

The luxury of the Egyptian court and people knew no bounds; and the magnificence and costliness of their dress, and the elaborateness of their toilet, were only equalled by their own peculiar mode of sepulture. It is asserted that the expense of the embalming and burial of a single member of her vast community was, in many cases, equal to a modern fortune; yet the practice of mummification was preserved in Egypt for upwards of thousand years. Some of the most beautiful designs on our shawls, dresses, and other textile fabrics, and on our pottery—the very character, figure, and applications of numerous articles of our toilet and domestic use—were common among the Egyptians prior to the age of Abraham. The wedding ring is of Egyptian origin, and, through the ancient Jews, has descended to modern times. There is strong reason for supposing that even the daguerreotype, photography, and the electric telegraph were known to the Egyptian hierarchy; while a means of rapid transit, resembling the modern railway, was undoubtedly used by the same body in their long subterranean passages and galleries.

The date at which the warm bath was first known, and its progress, among the early Egyptians, are now matters of conjecture. From an incident related in the sacred text, it has been inferred by some persons that neither public nor private baths existed in Egypt until after the birth of Moses, since we are told that "the daughter of Pharaoh, with her maidens, came down to the river side to wash herself" (properly, "lave her person," *i. e.*, bathe); but to draw such an inference from this passage appears absurd.

Such was Egypt under many successive dynasties and vicissitudes, extending over a period of upwards of two thousand years. At length her magnificence and refinement dwindled into voluptuousness, effeminacy, and weakness.

THE ASSYRIANS.

The splendor and voluptuousness of the ancient Assyrians are not only chronicled by the earliest profane historians, and alluded to in the Old Testament, but are also indubitably shown in the remains of her buried cities. The recent discoveries among the ruins of ancient Nineveh—the Ninus of the Greeks and Romans—have thrown a new light on this hitherto obscure portion of the history of our race.

The Assyrians rivalled, and even surpassed, the Egyptians in many of their leading characteristics—in magnificence, luxury, and personal display. The extreme beauty and costliness of the "Assyrian garments," as well as the elaborate nature of the toilet of her kings and nobles, distinguished them among all the other nations of the East. The Persians imitated them in these points; and the former of these characteristics ultimately descended even to the Romans.

The dresses worn by the Assyrian kings were dyed of the richest tints, and beautifully embroidered; and the designs upon them were of the most varied and tasteful description, taken from both the animal and vegetable world. "More than one necklace, of elegant form, was generally suspended around the neck. The arms were encircled with armlets, and the wrists with bracelets, all equally remarkable for the taste and beauty of their design and workmanship. The clasps were in the shape of the heads of lions and other animals, and in the centre of the bracelets were stars and rosettes, which were probably inlaid with precious stones. Ear-rings of many kinds were worn." The designs often resembled those employed in modern jewelry.

This luxuriance and richness of the dress and personal ornaments of the Assyrians were accompanied by a corresponding amount of attention to the cosmetic arts and the toilet. "They carefully and elaborately plaited their hair and their beards. The hair was parted over the forehead, and fell from behind the ears on the shoulders, in a large bunch of ringlets. The beard was allowed to grow to its full length; and, descending low on the breast, was divided into two or three rows of curls. The moustache was carefully trimmed and curled at the ends. The hair, as well as the beard, appears to have been dyed, as is still the custom in Persia; but it has been doubted whether the hair represented in the sculptures was natural or artificial." The latter was probably, in many instances, the case, as their neighbors, the Egyptians, were accustomed to wear large wigs, elaborately plaited and adorned, and even false beards were not unknown among them." The eyebrows and eyelashes were dyed black; and a dark pigment, consisting chiefly of finely powdered antimony, was employed to blacken the extreme edges of the lids, and thus increase the brilliancy of the eyes. The charms of the complexion were promoted by the use of skin cosmetics. The cheeks and lips had their hues brightened or modified, as occasion might require; and the teeth received a like attention. Nor were cleanliness and hygiene forgotten—the luxuries of the bath being not only highly prized, but profusely provided for and indulged in.

A description of the toilet of the voluptuous Assyrians is given in the amusing story of Parsondes. On Nanarus upbraiding Parsondes for his ingratitude, he replied:—"Am I not more manly, and more useful to the king than you are, who are shaved, and have your eyes underlined with stibium and your face painted with white lead?" On which Nanarus, beckoning to a eunuch, said: "Lead off this fellow. Shave and rub with pumice-stone the whole of his body, excepting the head. Bathe him twice a day and anoint him. Underline his eyes, and plait his hair as women do. Let him learn to play on the harp, and to accompany it with his voice, that he may appear among the female musicians, with whom he shall pass his time, having a smooth skin and wearing the same garments as they do." These orders, we are told, were carefully executed, and the rough Parsondes soon assumed the soft and effeminate appearance which he had derided in his tormentor.

These voluptuous and effeminate practices were common among the nobles and higher classes of the Assyrian empire. Xenophon informs us that Astyages had his eyes and face painted, and wore false hair. According to Athenæus, the gentle but luxurious Sardanapalus assumed the dress and ornaments of a woman. His chin was shaved, and his skin, which was kept smooth with pumice-stone, was white as milk; and his eyes and eyebrows were painted black, in the manner above referred to. This monarch, the last of a long line of sovereigns, whose only faults were his extreme love of the arts of peace and civilization, and his voluptuous habits and effeminacy, is said to have allowed his sceptre to pass from his grasp, "as he was endeavoring to finger the fine needle and thread," surrounded by the gentler portion of his household.

BABYLONIANS AND PERSIANS.

The Babylonians, Chaldæans, Medes, Persians, and Phœnicians, for the most part, resembled the Assyrians in the richness of the costume of their princes and nobles, as well as in the complicated character of their toilet. We are told that the Persians, at the time of Darius, were remarkable for the length and beauty of their hair, and that artificial head-dresses were in common use among them. According to Herodotus, the Babylonians wore their hair long. The extreme magnificence of this people, even in their later days, may be imagined from the circumstance that Cato, on receiving, as a legacy, a "Babylonian garment," sold it, because he conceived it was too costly for a Roman citizen to wear. The descriptions given of ancient Babylon and its people appear, indeed, almost incredible. During the reign of Nebuchadnezzar this city was the envy and admiration of the whole Eastern world. It contained everything which luxury and sensuality could conceive or riches procure. The greatness of this golden city, "its magnificence and vices," are frequently touched by the sacred owriters.